

# **GRIST FROM THE MILL FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE**

**January 2004**



## **Hats Off to Our Volunteers**

Snowstorms, flooding, even an earthquake cannot deter our valiant volunteers. An early December snowstorm caused us to reschedule one day of Children's Holiday Shopping, but a little snow doesn't discourage determined shoppers and train exhibit fans. Once the parking lot was clear, customers, train watchers, and, most important, our volunteers appeared. The rescheduled shopping day brought more customers. As a result, our sales for this year match the results of last year's program. Many thanks to those who showed up in the snow or rescheduled their volunteer time to match the new program date.

Leading tours, teaching school groups, decorating the site, ho-hoing at Country Christmas, helping children shop, and serving holiday tea kept all volunteers busy with just a little time to complete personal holiday preparations. Once again, we could not possibly have done it without your help. Many thanks for including Colvin Run Mill on your to-do list and sharing your holiday spirit with everyone.



## **Winter Hours**

In January and February the site closes at 4pm with the last tour at 3pm. Even on warm days, the mill retains its brisk atmosphere, so watch visitors for blue lips or frozen toes and tailor your tour accordingly. The video in the warm barn is a valuable addition to our winter tours and a welcome place to warm up.



## **Christmas Cards**

Don't discard those old Christmas cards! Donate them to Jennifer Blackwood's Christmas Card Rescue and Recycling Center. They will brighten Christmas trees and create long-lived memories when children create ornaments at our holiday programs. Just drop them off the next time you are at Colvin Run Mill.



## **February 22-24 in Ocean City, Md.**



Walk the Ocean City beach without the summer crowds. The 20<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Small Museums Association is scheduled for Feb. 22-24 at the Clarion Fontainebleau in Ocean City, Md. We would love to have the company of any volunteers who want to learn the nuts and bolts of small museums and meet the interesting people, many of them volunteers, who operate these local treasures.

The conference cost of \$130 includes sessions on Monday and Tuesday, four meals, a wine and cheese reception on Sunday evening and one-year membership in the Small Museum Association. The Clarion offers a special room rate of \$50 per room. What a bargain! For more information, talk to Ann Korzeniewski, co-president of the association.



## From the Miller's Corner

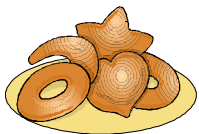
Phil Bowling, our favorite mechanic, has worked with his machinist friends at the B & O Railroad Museum in Baltimore to make a metal plate for the new foot bearing on the bridge tree. The new bearing will be larger than the current one and will sit in a metal box containing oil, so the bearing will be constantly lubricated, much better than greasing with a grease gun before each use. Hopefully, making the bearing bigger and keeping it lubricated will extend its life beyond seven years.



## A Few Favorite Things

On Friday March 26, the Collections Section of the Fairfax County Park Authority will present *A Few Favorite Things: Pleasures and Pastimes in Early America* at George Mason University. Pets, games, music, dancing, confections -- these are just some of the topics to be discussed and demonstrated. Jeanne Niccolls and Susan Clark have recruited authorities from Winterthur, the Colonial Music Institute, the University of South Carolina and the Library Company of Philadelphia to present intriguing insights into how early Americans spent their leisure time.

The \$55 registration includes lectures, demonstrations, tabletop displays as well as parking and lunch. Prepaid registrations are required by March 14. For more information, see the flyer in the volunteer room, or contact Susan at 703-631-1429 or [susan.clark@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:susan.clark@fairfaxcounty.gov).



## Arti-Facts from Dawn

In the midst of making holiday cookies, did you stop to wonder when cookies became popular? When and where did the idea originate to cut out shapes to make cookies? How were early cookie cutters made and how did they look? Intrepid Dawn explored the origins of cut-out cookies and shares her answers in the attachment and in the new display in the general store.



## Congratulations

December was a productive month for our volunteers and we are pleased to announce the birth of several potential future volunteers.

Sarah Wimer and Peter Wimer are the proud parents of John Patrick, 7lbs 11 ounces, who was born on December 19<sup>th</sup>. John is the first grandchild on both sides of the family and all the grandparents declared him the perfect Christmas present. Sarah, a Sunday docent, promises to bring John to the mill very soon and show him the ropes.

Ken Asher's eldest son, Jason, and his wife Jodie, who live in Atlanta had an early Christmas gift. Arriving on December 19th, Graysen Elizabeth, showed up at a healthy 7 lbs 4 ounces. Her 5-year old sister, Hannah, was delighted with the early Christmas arrival. Upon receiving the news, the proud grandpa promptly hopped on a plane and spent the weekend visiting the newest arrival to the Asher clan.

Tina Yannarell was disappointed that her radiation treatments kept her from being in Knoxville to be with her daughter for the birth of her newest grandchild in December. Tina is doing well with her treatment, but we have not heard yet about the new addition.



Crystal Allison, former volunteer who now lives in Florida, announced that she is a grandma again. Granddaughter Kaela Mae was born in April to Doug and Dana Allison. Kaela and her parents live in Virginia, so perhaps Crystal will visit us when she is spoiling her granddaughter.



## Gotcha

Gotcha is Jeanne Niccoll's (of the Collections Section) horse. Gotcha really gotcha Jeanne when he went left and Jeanne went straight – to the ground, breaking her hip. She is pinned together and has started therapy to get back in shape – maybe even back in the saddle.



## Goodbye

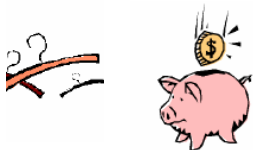
Jennifer Helfman, the general store keeper, is leaving us to pursue permanent full-time employment in the history field. She is working on several leads and hopes to accomplish her goal soon. She will continue working part-time at the Frying Pan Park store during her search.

Lisa Moore, a Saturday docent, finds that changing careers has taken increasing time and commitment with school and work vying for her attention. Lisa has decided to sacrifice her volunteer time at Colvin Run Mill to be able to fit sleeping into her schedule. To atone, she volunteered lots of extra time in December. Thanks Lisa.



## Hello

Brendan Hurley followed lots of tours in December, learning the interpretive techniques used by Colvin Run Mill docents. He is now putting into practice all he has learned and will be a much-needed Sunday docent. Brendan worked in radio marketing before becoming vice president of marketing for Goodwill Industries several months ago. He is willing to share his expertise and contacts to help us market our unique site and programs.



## From Closets to Cash

In your post-holidays cleaning, remember to bring all your discarded treasures to Colvin Run Mill so Marjorie Lundegard can take them to the Treasure Trove to sell for the Friends of Colvin Run Mill. Marjorie's efforts continue to enrich the coffers of the Friends which sponsors site programs, promotes Colvin Run Mill and supports staff training and initiatives.

## On the Road with Bob and Marge

Bob and Marge never get enough of mills. On their way home from the mill conference in New Jersey, they stopped in Medford NJ to visit the Kirby Mill. Built in 1773, the mill and associated buildings are now owned by the Medford Historical Society which hopes to restore the mill to working order.

# Lookie, Cookies!

By Dawn Kehrler



Tin cookie cutters from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and cookies made using the cookie cutters are in the new exhibit in the General Store display case. The cookie cutters consist of a strip of tin, bent and curved to form the design, soldered to a roughly cut disc of tin which forms the back. I wonder how many tasty cookies have been made over the years from these cookie cutters.

In researching the origins of cookie cutters, I found the following information on the web site [www.antiquetalk.com/colu,m69.htm](http://www.antiquetalk.com/colu,m69.htm)

"Most experts believe that tinned steel cutters originated in Europe several hundred years ago when wood carvers introduced metal inserts to their sophisticated sweet dough molds. Old European cutters tend to be outline forms with small cross bracing bars for support. American cutters often have a full tin plate in the back and occasionally, a handle. Many early cookie cutters found in the States have one or two circular holes cut in their tin back. The holes are normally sized to fit a lady's finger, so that she might be able to push stuck cookie dough out of the cutter, or use them to better hold her tool.

The first American manufactured cookie cutters were made shortly after the conclusion of the Civil War when great industries were looking to adapt to a peace-time economy. ...Aluminum all but supplanted tin as the favored material for cutters in the 1920s. Plastic cutters were introduced in great number following WWII."<sup>1</sup>



The cookies included in the exhibit are real food, made using sand tart and ginger snap recipes from Fanny Farmer's 1896 cookbook. I used the cutters to make several cookies and sprayed them with acrylic spray to preserve them. Because the cutters are collection items, I placed plastic wrap over the dough to protect the metal before I cut out the cookies.

The word cookie comes from the Dutch word koekje, which means cakes or little cakes. In colonial New York, koekjes were a popular treat offered to New Year's Day visitors in peoples' homes. English-speaking New Yorkers took over the name as well as the custom.

The first American cookbook in which the word cookie appeared was Amelia Simmons' *American Cookery*, published in 1796. Because the Americanism appeared in the *New York Daily Advertiser* in 1786, Amelia Simmons' use of it was not new or original. But *her* cookbook was apparently the first American cookbook to abandon the British name of cakes and instead use the word cookie.

Happy cookie making!

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